

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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COUNTY RESPONDS TO COMMUNITY CONCERNS ABOUT ASSISTANCE FOR UNDERPRIVILEGED

FREDERICK, MD – In response to concerns and questions raised from those in the community, Frederick County Government would like to clarify its long-standing history of providing assistance to the underprivileged. The plight and the needs of poor and homeless people in the community have been topics of considerable discussion during recent weeks.

The county currently delivers over \$6 million a year in housing assistance. In addition to this, the county has recently proposed to join with The City of Frederick to increase funding for the cold weather shelter to make it a year-round shelter for needy individuals. Providing appropriate housing assistance is one of the most important benefits that can be provided for the poor.

Providing basic food, housing and medical care for children is also a high priority for the county. The county's FY2014 budget provided over \$26 million in citizen services for those in need. This includes \$6.2 million for housing grants; \$8.8 million for the Health Department; \$6.3 million for TransIT Services; \$2.2 million for seniors; \$2.3 million for families and children, and \$1.4 million for employment services, plus over \$200,000 to non-profits for pharmacy assistance, mental health assistance, housing and food for the needy. This is in addition to the meals that are provided for needy children through Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS).

Vice President C. Paul Smith of the Frederick Board of County Commissioners stated, "With this in mind, it must be acknowledged that the county does a lot to provide for the needs of poor children and the underprivileged. We continue to be committed to provide assistance to poor students whenever new situations of need arise."

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During recent ice and snow events, volunteer fire companies and the Department of Aging Senior Center made their facilities available to provide warming centers and a shelter for those without electricity, as well as for homeless individuals. These services were in addition to the services provided by the Frederick Rescue Mission, Advocates for the Homeless, Religious Coalition, Frederick Community Action Agency (FCAA), and others.

On January 17, Frederick County convened a meeting of the Synergies Committee to discuss issues related to homelessness. Present at that meeting were representatives of the Board of County Commissioners, the Board of Education, The City of Frederick, the City of Brunswick, FCAA and several non-profit organizations. At that meeting, Director Pat Rosensteel of the Frederick County Citizens Services Division was tasked to coordinate with FCPS, the municipalities and various service organizations in establishing an improved communication network to better enable the participating parties to provide housing for children whenever a homeless situation may develop.

The next meeting of the Synergies Committee will be held at 1:30 p.m. on May 2 at Winchester Hall, 12 East Church Street, Frederick, Md. The public is invited to attend.

"It is critical," Commissioner Smith said, "That the Frederick community continues to promptly address student homelessness whenever it occurs and as soon as it occurs. The current efforts of the Synergies Committee will help us to do this."

For additional information, contact Commissioner Smith at 301-600-1101 or via e-mail at cpsmith@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

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